A SERIOUS

EXHORTATION

TO THE

PRESENT and SUCCEEDING

Generation

IN

NEW-ENGLAND,

Earnestly calling upon all to endeavour that the Lords *Gracious Presence* may be continued with *Posterity.*

Being the substance of the LAST SERMONS preached

By Mr. *ELEAZER MATHER*, late Pastor of the Church in *Northampton* in *New-England.*

The second Edition

Judg. 2. 10, 17. *And also all that Generation were gathered to their fathers, and there arose another Generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works that he had done for Israel. --- They turned quickly out of the way that their fathers walked in, obeying the Commandments of the Lord, but they did not so.*

Psal. 78, 3, 4, 5. *--- Our fathers have told us -- We will not hide them from their Children, shewing the Generation to come the praises of the Lord. He appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their Children, that the Generation to come might know them, even the Children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their Children.*

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To the Reader.

Concerning the Reaſons inducing to the Publication of theſe Sermons, I have in the Epiſtle prefixed to the firſt Edition of them, expreſſed what they were; & ſhall add nothing further at this Time, ſaving that the Conſideration of the Equity of that Antient Law that required a ſurviving Brother to endeavour the perpetuating of the Name and memory of a Brother deceaſed, hath had its weight with me. When Cœpio *was dead his Brother* Cato *expended eight Talents in erecting for him a Tomb of* Thracian *marble, that his brothers Name might never dye. Shall an* Heathen *do thus? and ſhall not a* Chriſtian *take care that his Brothers Name be not put out of* Iſrael? *I have thought that it was worthily done of that learned* Lud. Cappellus *to publiſh ſundry profitable works of his deceaſed Brother. So in our own Nation Mr.* Dyke, *Mr.* Culverwell, *and of late (not to mention others.) Mr.* Janeway, *whoſe commendable Example it is my duty to follow. And I am the rather willing to do ſo, for that theſe Sermons (though much ſhort of what they would have been had the Author Himſelf emitted them) when firſt in this way made publick found great acceptance with the Lords People. As for this* ſecond Impreſſion, *it hath been promoved by the charity of a pious Gentlewoman (a Mother in this* Iſrael) *who out of reſpect to her own Children and Poſterity, as alſo the good of the* Riſing Generation in *New-England, was deſirous (God having put it into her heart) to encourage the Republication and diſperſion of what is here preſented.*

Concerning the Author, my near Relation to him prohibits my ſaying much, nor is it needful; ſince it is well known that he was a Common Father *unto all thoſe Plantations in this Wilderneſs, where God had caſt his Habitation. He was for ſeveral years, very much exerciſed with inward, ſpiritual Temptations. Temptation (ſaid* Luther) *maketh a Divine: It doth ſo indeed, though it may be the Temptations are ſometimes* Horribillia de Deo, Terribillia de Fide. *The Lord did ſanctifie the Temptati-*

brother

ons of this my Brother, ſo as to keep him humble and low thoughted of himſelf; And doubtleſs they were one Reaſon of his being ſuch an inward ſearching Preacher, as I know not whether he hath left any amongſt us, in that reſpect going beyond him. Howbeit, juſt before his laſt ſickneſs, God did graciouſly lift up the Light of his Countenance and ſhine in upon his Soul. For the laſt words which I find written in his Diary, *are theſe,* July 10. 1669. This Evening if my heart deceive me not, ſome ſweet workings of Soul after God in Chriſt, according to the Terms of the Covenant of grace; The general and Indefinite expreſſion of the Promiſe was an encouragement to look to Chriſt, that he would do that for me, which he hath promiſed to do for ſome, and I need as much as any; The Lord hath not excluded me, nor dare I exclude my ſelf. But if the Lord will help I deſire to lye at his Feet, and accept of grace in his own way, and to wait his own Time through his Power enabling of me; Though I am dead, without ſtrength, help or hope in my ſelf, yet the Lord requireth nothing at my hand in my own ſtrength, but that by his Power I ſhould look to him, to work all my works in me and for me. When I find a dead heart the thoughts of this are exceeding ſweet and reviving, being full of grace, and diſcovering the very heart and love of Jeſus. *Theſe were (ſo far as doth appear) the laſt words that ever he wrote in his Life. The next day, finding himſelf not well, he ſet his Houſe in order, his ſickneſs proving a violent Feaver. After twelve dayes Conflict with that diſeaſe he went to the Boſome of that Ieſus, of whoſe heart and love towards him, He had ſuch a late and bleſſed diſcovery. Thus did the Lord find him. And bleſſed is that Servant whom the Lord at his coming ſhall find ſo doing.*

Boſton 28. *of*
12 *m.* 1677. *Increaſe Mather.*

A WORD TO THE *Present and succeeding Generation* IN NEW-ENGLAND.

1 Kings 8. 57.

The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us.

IN the beginning of this Chapter we have the Historical Relation of a General Assembly of the Representative Body of *Israel*, the end whereof was the bringing in the Ark of God into its proper place; from *ver.* 1. to 6. This occasion Solomon improves unto the manifestation of his Piety towards God and respect towards *Israel*; as will be evident by taking a view of the several parts of this Chapter, which are four:

1. His Benedictory Oration, from *ver.* 14, to 22.
2. His famous Prayer, from *ver.* 22, to 54.
3. The blessing of his People, *ver.* 55.
4. His Festivals, or offering Sacrifice, from *ver.* 62, to the end. The Text falls within the third of these, *scil.* His blessing. Where we have

First, A thankful Acknowledgement of Gods mercy, *ver.* 56.

Secondly, A renewed *Prayer for Gods presence*, in this verse. So that this Verse is an earnest Petition, expressed

1. *Affirmatively*, by way of Supplication.
2. *Negatively*, by way of Deprecation. In the former we have 1. The Petition it self, *The Lord our God be with us.*

2. The Illustration, *As he was with our Fathers.* In the latter there is a gemination of the same Request, by divers expressions importing the same thing, *Let him not leave us, nor forsake us.* And all this is to note the weightiness of the thing prayed for, and earnestness of desire that it might be granted. Whence the Doctrine to be observed from the words, is,

Doct. *That the Continuance of the Lords gracious Presence with a People, from Fathers to Children after them, is a special favour of God, and much to be desired by all that are cordial to the weal of the Israel of God.* Or thus: *That the Lord would be graciously present with the Succeeding Generation, as he was with their Fathers, not leaving nor forsaking of them, is the great desire of those that wish well to the Lords people.*

See some Scriptures for this.

That the Lords gracious Presence is a special favour, and much to be desired, see *Gen.* 26.3. This we see was *Moses* his great request, *Exod.* 33. 15. *q. d.* what is an Angel without thee? what is *Canaan* without thee? See also *Josh.* 1. and *Judg.* 6.16. And that the Succession of the Lords presence from one Generation to another, is especially to be desired, see 1 *Chron.* 22.10. and 28.20. *Psal.* 90.

A few words briefly for the Explication of this Doctrine: Application being the main thing aimed.

Quest. 1. *What is meant by the Lords being with them?*

Answ. First, there is a *Natural Presence* of God, whereby he is every where, [illegible] out of Hell, *Psal.* 139.7. this is not the thing [illegible] prayes for here.

Secondly, there is a *Gracious Presence* of God; and this is the thing here desired: and this contains as much good as possibly can be desired; universality, fulness, perpetuity of good is in the Lords gracious Presence. This in the inchoation of it is the beginning of Heaven, in the perfection of it, it is the compleatment of Heaven. Now God is graciously present divers wayes.

1. *By his Providence*, there is a special Providence of God towards his People, the Lord doth in a special manner see and take

take notice of his people, as here, *ver.*29. *His eyes are open upon his Temple*, and upon his Church continually, 2 *Chron.* 16.9. preſerving and providing for them, *Gen.*28.20.& 48. 15916. *Heb.*13.5.10. and protecting of them, *Iſai.*43.2.and comforting of them, *Chap.*41.17.

2. *By his Ordinances*, whether in Church or Commonwealth. In this reſpect was *Solomons* Petition: The Temple was a viſible Teſtimony of Gods Preſence, as here *ver.*13. *An houſe for the Lord to dwell in*, a ſetled place for him to abide in, and therefore the name of that place where Ordinances are ſet up, and managed with power and glory, is ſaid to be *Jehovah Shammah*, Ezek.48.35. The works of God are ſeen in the Sanctuary, *Pſal.*68.24.

3. *By his Spirit*, working grace in the heart: there is the in-dwelling Preſence of God in the Heart, as in a Temple; *Rev.*3.20. *Sup with them*, i. e. keep a continual feaſt in their hearts.

Queſt. 2. *What is here meant by Fathers?*

Anſw. In general; *All Superiours, and Anceſtors. There are Fathers by natural generation, immediate*, as *Abraham* to *Iſaac*, or *mediate*, in the word, all Progenitors, *Deut.*10.28. Fathers by age, 1 *Job* 2. Fathers by office, in a Civil ſenſe, 2 *Kin.* 5.13. and in a Spiritual ſenſe, 2 *Kings* 13.14. Thoſe that are inſtrumental in regeneration of ſinners, are Spiritual fathers to them, 1 *Cor* 4.15.

Queſt. 3. *What is meant by leaving or forſaking a people, which is the contrary to be with us?*

Anſw. Theſe two words note the ſame thing, one and the ſame thing is implied under theſe divers expreſſions: but the word is doubled, to ſignifie earneſtneſs of deſire not to be left, *q.d. Do not let any thing befall us, that may look like leaving or forſaking.* To the more full underſtanding of what is intended hereby, it will be convenient to ſhew the various acceptations of theſe two expreſſions. 1. Leaving, is ſometimes taken for *committing to an others truſt*, Gen.39.6. *q.d. Let us not be committed unto others.* 2. *To deſiſt*, or break off from a thing, *Job.*9.27.ſo here; *q.d.* Do not break off former kindneſs:

That faithfulnes and mercy that fathers had experience of, do not put a stop to it at their Children, but let there be a succession of grace to their Successors. 3. To cast off by way of contempt, *Prov.* 3.3. *Hos.* 4.11. And for that word *Forsake*, it signifies liberty, or freedome in leaving, 1 *Sam.* 9.5. So here when the Lord *gives over to care* for a people, and suffers them to do as they will, and shift as they can, then he forsaketh. 2. To loosen or break in pieces: *Isai.* 33.3. when tacklings are loosened, and the Lord sets a people adrift as it were, and lets them go off to Sea, then doth he forsake. 3. To pluck up and break down, *Isai.* 16.8. the word there is the same that is in the text. 4. To scatter, *Judg.* 15.8. So here *Salomon* prayes that the Lord would not suffer them to be scattered.

Quest. 4 *Why should we thus pray? and why in special for the Lords presence to succeeding Generations?*

Resp. 1. *Because of the good that is in the enjoyment of Gods Presence*, even all good, *Gen.* 17.1. *Psal.* 30.5. & 63.3. Have him, and have all: A man cannot want light if he have the Sun, nor water if he have the Fountain, nor any good if he have God, *Psal.* 23.4.

Resp. 2. Because of the evil that ensueth if he leave: *Woe to such*, Hos. 9.12. *Wo to them when I depart from them*: the Lord is angry indeed when it is the Husband is angry when he casts his childe out of doors, *Jer.* 12.7. *Mine anger shall be kindled, and I will forsake them, many evils shall befal them, so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not among us?* there is no help in Heaven for us, if God leave us. This is the bitternes and venome of all Gods Judgements. As every affliction is sweetned with Gods presence, so the Lords derelict on imbitters every affliction: this reacheth the heart, *Psal.* 42.10. yea if God leave a people, then they are sure to be given up to utter ruine. If the Soul leave the Body, it becometh loathsome, and must be buried: so it is here. To see a Soul forsaken of God is a doleful sight a flood of vengeance then breaks in, and there is no bank to keep it out: for if God leave, all Creatures leave too, so that men shall finde no succour, or favour elsewhere, then delivered into

hands

hands of Enemies, 2 *Kings* 21.14. *Psal.* 78.11, yea, then men will be a terrour to themselves, 1 *Sam.* 21.15. In a word, to be cast out of Gods presence is the beginning of Hell, *Matth.* 25.41.

Moreover there are speciall Reasons why the *Lords presence* should be desired to succeeding Generations, which shall be but mentioned.

First, from the less to the greater: we desire other blessings for Children, much more should we desire this; you desire to leave an Inheritance to your Children, *Prov.* 13.22. & 15.14. there is much more reason to desire that they might inherit the Lords blessing.

Secondly, Because they have as much need of the Lords Presence as their Fathers; their Fathers could not live and glorifie God in their generation, had not the Lord been with them, no more can those that succeed them, there is like ground to desire for the one as for the other, in respect of need, that one hath as well as other: 1. In respect of the weightiness of the work; the work of one Generation is no less then of another, which is to serve God, and advance the Interest of Religion. 2. In respect of Instruments that carry on the work; Alas! poor feeble creatures little Children, and what can children do in Fam[illegible] 1 *Kings* 3.7. 3. In respect of Adversaries, difficulties [illegible] age, but always there is much to hinder the work of God [illegible] are the same corruptions, Pride, Unbelief, and [illegible] the same or worse enemies; nay, latter ages are and will be [illegible] then former, 2 *Tim.* 3.1.

Thirdly, Because this is the Generall good work of every one, to pray and labour that the Lords Presence may be with succeeding Generations.

Fourthly, Such as do not thus, will incurre the brand of Apostates, and be cast off from God for ever for casting off God, 2 *Chron.* 15.2.

Fifthly, It makes much for the glory of God, that the gracious presence of the Lord should be continued from Fathers unto children, therefore this is much to be desired and prayed for. But to apply this.

Use 1. Hence take notice what bottom and foundation it is that we stand on: all good is wrapped up in this, *The Lords being with us*. Can we say that we are safe because of former mercyes? The Lord hath been with us in dayes of old, hath blessed our fathers, and are we therefore secure? No verily he that hath been with them, may leave us, he that hath been a Saviour in former Generations, may become a wayfaring man, as a man astonied that cannot save, *Jer.* 14. 8, 9. If we forsake him, he will forsake us, notwithstanding all former engagements. It is not what God hath done heretofore, that will make us a happy people at present: it's the wisdome of a people to discern the Lords dispensation, *Psa.* 107. 43 & an heavy sad Judgment it is, not to discern the Lords departing, *Hos.* Are you like to have good dayes? are things like to go well in your time? Is Truth and Peace like to be in your days? If the *Lord be with you, as he was with your Fathers*, then it will be, otherwise not. Oh therefore learn to know the footsteps of God in your own souls, for the Lord draws near by his Spirit and departs first by the spirits departing; therefore consider of this, have you as much of God as your fathers [illegible]

Use 2. What are we to think of them that [illegible] such a prayer as this is? Verily they bear little [illegible] to the place or people where they live; that [illegible] this request. Many pray for a good harvest, [illegible] moral mercies but not for the Lords presence: [illegible] there are that are not sensible of the Lords [illegible] them, but if they have outward Comforts [illegible] care not for Gods Presence, *Job.* 21. [illegible] frame this is: for, *They that are far from the Lord shall perish*, Psal. 73. 26.

Use. 3. Take notice of the Presence of God, how he doth come or go, approach near, or draw off from us. If this be the great thing to be desired, then it is the duty of all to observe what grounds of Hopes, what of Fears, respecting the Lords being with us as in dayes of old. Much of the Lords Presence hath been shewed unto this people in these *ends of the Earth*, Deut. 32. 2, 10, 11. We may truly say with the Church *Psal.* 44. 1, 2. *We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers*

have

have told us, what works thou didst in their dayes, in times of old how thou didst, &c. It ſtands all to conſider (both ſuch of former Generations, that are yet ſurviving, & thoſe of this other Generation, that are ſucceeding in the room of their Fathers) What, is God with us as in times paſt? God was with them, & is he with us, as he was with them? Let us view the footſteps of God, and mark whether the Lord be with us, as in days of old. And for that end I ſhall ſpread before you ſome *Signs of the Lords leaving a people.* And the firſt is this.

Firſt Sign. *When the Lord gives up a people to a ſlight Spirit*, not minding the Lords Preſence, whether with them, or farre off from them: Surely the Lord cannot be very near unto that people, that are not ſenſible of it. The preſence of Gods grace is a very evident ſenſible thing, and therefore if men feel not this, nor mourn not for the want of it; it is a ſymptome the Lord is withdrawn. Hence the Lord warns his people, *Jer. 6. 8. Be inſtructed, O Jeruſalem, leſt my ſoul depart from thee*; if unſenſible, and unmindful, I will be gone further and further from you, *Jer.* 26. when people are left to a regardleſs heart reflecting the tokens of the Lords diſpleaſure againſt them, *Hoſea* 7. 9. *Gray hairs are here and there upon them, and they know it not*; and other things leave them, but not the Lord. It is not with [illegible] was wont to be in reſpect of Trade, the fruits of the E[illegible] this they take notice of, but take no notice how it is with them in reſpect of the Lords Preſence *Jer.* 44. 17. 18 *Then we had plenty of victuall, and were well, and ſaw no evil; but ſince we left* [illegible] *have been conſumed by the Sword, and by the Famine.* They take notice of outward plenty, and outward ſcarcity, of abundance and plenty reſpecting things of this life, but as to the Lords Preſence with them, not a word ſpoken of that. As mens hearts upon ſerious conſideration of the Lords nearneſs to, or removal from them are affected or not affected therewith, ſo is the Lord anſwerably abiding with, or leaving of a People. The Lord is farre gone when there is no enquiry whether he be gone or no. Oh what cauſe of awakning upon this account? What is the ſtirring Enquiry of men in theſe dayes? What is the ſolemn Enquiry

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that passeth from man to man, from Plantation to Plantation, from Generation to Generation? Is this the Enquiry of the old and gray-headed, *Oh*, is the Lord with us as he was wont to be? Is this the demand of the Rising Generation, Have we as much of the Presence of God, as our Fathers before us had? Do we live as near, are we as much acquainted with God? Is the same Spirit poured out upon us that was on them?

2. *When the Lord takes away the chief Instruments and Means of his Presence, and gracious blessing to a People.* When men have a minde to depart, and remove their dwelling they will send away their Plate, and such things as are of greatest worth and price with them; so here: Is not the Lord packing up the chief Goods he hath, and removing them away, when he takes away Props and Pillars? this declares that he hath left the house and cares not much though it tumbles down, *Isa.* 3. 1, 3, 8. When Ordinances are gone, and they that should dispense them gone, this is a sign that God himself is gone, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. A General when he gives order to remove his Standard, is an evidence that he himself is resolved to go thence; that is here: As such are pledges of the Lords Presence [illegible] removal, especially when there are not others [illegible] like grace and holiness to stand up, and fill their place, to declare that the Lord is upon his departure. It [illegible] with *Israel* when *Joshua*, and the Elders that out-[illegible] were gathered to their Fathers. It was a true and weighty speech of one, *viz.* *That the Death of godly [illegible] proves Deaths-day of Religion, or at least [illegible] wounds to Religion.* Its both a sign and an occasion of degeneracy, and so of the Lords Spirit departing from a people. *There is a special hand of Gods Providence exercised in the decease of his Worthies*; It is either in great wrath, or in great mercy: If it awaken not to a Spirit of Mourning and Supplication, unfeigned and universal Repentance, it's a sure sign it is in wrath, and speaks nothing but woe to that people, *Isa.* 57. 1. *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.* When the Kings special Favourites are dismissed from Court,

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it's a token the King intends to remove from that place, where his Majesty was wont to reside: So when God dismisseth his righteous ones, it is a sign that he himself will be gone ere long.

3. *When outward prosperity is unsanctified, when the abounding of temporal blessings is accompanied with the abounding of sin.* Though prosperity in it self be of that nature, that it is hard to judge of love or hatred, presence or absence of God, with or from a people thereby; yet as it is attended or accompanied, so it is evidential, though not in it self, yet in the effects and concomitants and consequents of it: when prosperity falls on a people that have learned to want as well as to abound; when creatures are means to convey divine favour from God, and hearty obedience unto God, then they are signs of the Lords presence with a people, *Hosea* 2. 16. But when men have prosperity, outward riches, and know not what to do with them, besides making gods of them, this is a sign that the Lords gracious presence is not among a people, when men love Religion [illegible] world, and what they get in temporals they lose in Spirituals, [illegible] 106. 15. Outward prosperity is a worm at the root of [illegible], so that Religion dies when the world thrives, *Deut.* [illegible] & 32. 15. There is sometimes a Palpable difference as to [illegible] between a low under state, and a flourishing thriving [illegible] for the former, see *Zeph.* 3. 11 for the latter, see *Hos.* 13. [illegible] Oh consider, the time was when less of the world, but was [illegible] more of Heaven? less Trading, Buying, Selling, [illegible] more watching over our own hearts, more close walking [illegible] plenty, and less iniquity; men lay aside old Prayers, are almost afraid to put up the *New-England* Prayer, *Lord keep me poor, & keep me humble.* In a word, if I were to point out a people from whom God is going by one sure Character, it would be this, Such people as can make up that they want in God, with the presence of the Creature, can stop the crannies, and fill empty places of the Heart, with Creatures and Creature-comforts: they have not so much as they were wont to have, yet can fill up the room of God with worldly delights; though God be absent, yet if they

can get more of the world, that serves turn, *Jer.*2.13. Hence mens hearts say, How shall I live without my State, Honour, Peace, Friendship? but not, How shall I live without God?

4. *When a Spirit of Division and Contention in matters of Gods Worship, or the Spirit of the Times, and thence Religion turns into Faction*, that is an evidence that the Lord is a leaving of a people. The Lord cares not to dwell in a shaking tottering house long: A Spirit of Love and Unity is an evidence of the Lords prelence. *God is love*, and where love rules, God dwells, 1 *Joh.*4.16. where *Brethren live together in Unity, there the Lord commands the bleſſing, even life for evermore*, Pſal.133. 1,3. Unity keeps God amongſt a people, 2 *Cor.*13.11. But when Societies crack in pieces, room is made for God himſelf to be gone: What Father loves to dwell among fighting and quarrelling Children? His voyce to ſuch is, *I'll be gone until you agree*. When a houſe is a fire, what wiſe man will continue therein? Again, a Spirit of Contention is an evidence of Gods anger and diſpleaſure againſt a people, *Lam.*4.16. and [illegible] ruine each to other, *Judg.*9.20 23 *Numb.*21.28.20. eſpecially when a bleſſing is taken away from the means of [illegible] *Jer.* 14.18. Hence this evil follows upon ſuch [illegible] Religion is turned into Faction, Godlineſs [illegible] Parties and Strife, and in this and that particular [illegible] mention *Ahi Jehude* ſtroyed *the houſe of Ahab*, and [illegible] *the Temple of Baal*, out of a *falſhood Spirit*, and there [illegible] red all Religion according to his own Fashions [illegible] 10. And thus it was in Church, since [illegible] on touching matters of Religion, ſome for one way, and ſome for another, and thus contending about Circumſtances, they loſt the Eſſence. In a word, when men become moſt fierce zealous in their Religion (I cannot ſpeak it, nor you hear it with grief of heart enough) Religion is the occaſion of our Contentions and breach of Peace.

5. *When the Lord withholds the efficacious and effectual operations of his Spirit from his own Ordinances, that though they have them plentifully diſpenſed, yet they are but as a dead letter, they are the words and breath of men only, without life to their Souls*: for as on the contrary, no ſurer pledge of the Lords preſence

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with a people, then when the Spirit accompanies the Ordinances, and makes them effectual for the good of Souls: when the Lord is at the heels of the Messenger, and striketh home to the heart of poor creatures, that see God himself in Ordinances, 1 Cor. 14. 25. this is a sign the Lord is with them: so when they are continued to men, but the Spirit is not in them, they have them but no God in them; when the Lord absents himself from those set meetings for people to meet him in, now its undeniable the Lord is leaving such a people. *But what is this, you will say, that the efficacy and overcoming power of the Spirit is withheld from Ordinances? Answ.* This is matter of great weight, and therefore I shall a little stay upon it, and shew you when it is, in these specialities.

1. *When mens hearts are not humbled, and quickned and warmed by them,* when the Word is lodged only in the Porch, and never goeth into the House: Men get something to talk of, and hold up a Profession in the world, and bear up the Name of Religion withall, but their Hearts are not wrought upon: [illegible] are not suitable impressions upon mens *Hearts*, to the [illegible] that men have in their *Heads*; for the Word comes in power [illegible] it passes through all outsides, and enters into the heart, *Ps. 19. 7. Heb. 4. 12. A discerner of thoughts and [illegible] makes the heart naked, so e contra,* when the Word is [illegible] and virtue on the Souls of men, when God is not in it, [illegible] the Word is light without heat or life, as the Sun under [illegible] it warms not the Earth. Saints are wont to say of [illegible] *By that I have been quickned, Psal. 119.* that when the Word is like a cold fire, that gives [illegible] by and [illegible] no warmth, surely the Spirit of God is not there, for *the Spirit is quickneth,* 1 Cor. 3. 6. Joh. 6. 63. if Christ speaks, then there's life.

2. *When Ordinances are only occasions and means of disquiet, and of disturbance unto men,* but have no further efficacy upon them, but to cause them to go with galled and condemned Consciences: some have not so much as this, live and die in Security, having not one awakened thought all their dayes: But not many that live under the dispensation of the Gospel, but the

word is to them at sometimes, as *Rev.* 11. 9. a Word that did *torment them that dwell in the Earth.* Though they live under means of grace, and the Eternal Spirit is wrestling with them, yet they are so shut up under unbelief, and so in league and love with lust, that the word doth but torment them. Here is a generation of Christless sinners, that fret with indignation and vexation, that they cannot enjoy pleasures, & follow lusts with quiet and peace; and if they would speak out what is in their heart, they would say to Christ as the Devils, *Mat.* 8 29. *Art thou come to torment us?* or as it was with those that heard *Steven, they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth,* Acts 7. 54. Men that are in love with lusts, they cannot endure that God should come near them, they are not able to bear the strokes whereby he would break their stiff Spirit, but grudge against the Lord himself & fall out with the word that would convince them, *Rom.* 2. 8. Hence in the secret of their hearts they could be glad to hear no more such awakening, Heart searching, Soul-rowing Truths: *They say to God, Depart from us,* Job. 21. 14. They pronounce the sentence upon themselves, which the Lord will pronounce at the last day. A sad thing when a poor creature is buried above ground.

3. *When the word of God doth* [illegible] *in their sins and vain hopes,* but not [illegible] them from their sins. Then God is with his [illegible], when he doth not suffer poor creatures to [illegible] when he will not let them alone, but [illegible] of the head all is as were out of the fire, [illegible] the Devil delivers many sinful redeemed Souls, then the Lord is with them indeed; but when it is otherwise, the Lord is not in his Word, *Mat.* 15. 13. *All come into the world and know not wherefore, and go out and know not whither*; though they have many Advantages, yet they stand it out to the very last; they have been put into sad plunges in their own Spirits, but have got over them, and so go to Hell insensibly. When God is in his Ordinances, then it shall be said, *This and that man was born there,* Psal. 87. 5. but *when few new-born Christians,* this is a symptome God is not in his word.

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As when the Seed is sown and rots under the clods, but never springs up, there is no blessing, but a secret curse on it. Oh consider o this! *Are Conversions frequent among us?* Is God pulling men out of this ruefull state? I the Lord deny this to his Ordinances its because he is not in them. *O fearfull wrath!* to have them, and be hardned by them, & the abuse of them to answer for another day! To have them and yet to be plagued more then *Sodom*, and *Gomorrah* that never heard of them, in that day of eternal judgment.

4. *When Ordinances are unprofitable and empty things*, void of spiritual advantage; when men use them but as bad bargains, they lose rather then gain by them; as it was with them of old, *Mal.* 3. 4. *what profit* &c. Hence take up that quarrelling complaint, *Isa.* 58. 3. *wherefore have we fasted, & thou seest not?* &c. When God is in them, then they bring on to more fellowship with God & Christ Jesus; those that live under them are growing up in the fear of the Lord, *as David (Zec* 12. 8) *as the Angel of the Lord before them*, vigorous & active Christians it was with the *Thessalonians*, 2 Thess. 1. 3. *When the Sun* [illegible] *with healing under his wings, then they grow up as Calves in the* [illegible] Mal. 4. 2. As *a watered Garden*, Isa. 58. 11. & this will be profitable in root as well as branches, not all head and no heart. [illegible] when the contrary hereunto is true, that men languish & [illegible] fall away, time is spent in vain, these unprofitable hours of [illegible] or if they gain, it is only in some things and not in others. Alas! that men should spend time to no purpose; that [illegible] light of Gospel dispensations & yet walk in the dark [illegible] own hearts not knowing whether they must go to heaven or hell at last, little stability, little comfort by all the means they enjoy.

5. *When men can hear the Lords absence, and hidings away of his face & not lay it to heart as the saddest evil.* They keep Sabbaths, and enjoy no God in them, yet the heart breaks not though it be thus, this is sad indeed. 'Tis a token that the Lord is not wholly gone, that he is not so gone but that he may return again, when he gives a heart to mourn after him as they 1. *Sam.* 7. *Lamented after the Lord*: but when men can go days,

weeks, nay, it may be moneths together, and *no living Communion with God*, and yet never cry, mourn and lament after him, this saith the Lord is gone indeed, and so gone that unless thou awaken speedily (for ought I know this very Sermon) he will never return more, but leave thee desolate and forsaken to die in thy sins. Oh! shall the Lord depart from thee, and have this to charge upon thee, That he went away from thee for want of being intreated to stay with thee?

Use IV. May be a word of Exhortation. *Oh make this your main business, to keep God with you from Generation to Generation*: I beseech you let this be the care and prayer of every one. *The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our Fathers*. But this Use respects both the first Generation and this other Generation. 1. The *first Generation*, that have been betrusted with the management of the Kingdome of Christ, and the Interest of Religion (mostly) hitherto; *Labour to keep God still with you, even as in dayes of old, and also to leave his Presence with the Generations that are to come after you*, that you may say upon your death beds, when you are leaving the world to those that succeed, as sometimes old *Jacob* did to *Joseph*, [illegible]. *Behold I die, but God shall be with you.*

Here consider a few things.

Motive 1. This is the great [illegible] *Lord hath betrusted you, as he hath with our Gospel* [illegible] he hath done for you such great things as he hath [illegible] that to no might propogate Religion to those that [illegible] you. *Psal.* 78. 5, 6, 7. It was not for your [illegible] for the sake of your Children, that God made himself known unto you. Now I beseech you let not the Lord be disappointed of his end. God hath not given his Gospel unto men, that a few old *Christians* may enjoy something of the Presence of the Lord while they live, and then carry away the Gospel and Religion. Has Worthy Mr. *Mitchell* [said] *into the cold graves with them when they die*; No, but that they might hand down Religion, and engage the Lords Presence with the Generation after them. *It is part of the Generation work of every Christian*, to do his utmost that the Lords Name and Honour may be held up to the succeeding

Generation.

Generation. If you think that all the duty that lies on you is *respecting your selves only*, you are much mistaken: A godly mans work reaches further then so, *Psal.*77.18,19. 'Tis a sad sign God hath forsaken a people, when they are unmindful of the work of their Generation. That was *Davids* Spirit, that he would endeavour that Gods Name should be declared to, and embraced by the *people that were to be afterwards*, Psal.45. 17. and *Moses* his Prayer, *Psal.*90.16. and the Lords Promise, *Isa.*58.12. *Thou shalt raise up* (*Hebr.* settle) *the Foundations of many Generations*, of Age and Age, *i.e.* Lay such foundations of Holiness as shall endure from Age to Age.

Mot. 2. *To you is committed a special opportunity of propagating Religion and the Presence of God to the Rising Generation.*

1. In respect of *the Lord himself*, *he will do much at the Request of his old Servants.* A man will do much at the importunity of an ancient Acquaintance; *Paul* thought there was something Argumentative, when he writ to *Philemon*, that he was *Paul the aged*; and *David* made use of the like Argument with respect unto himself in reference to this duty, *Psal.*71.9,18. The Lord knows not how to deny an old Disciple any thing. You may go to the Lord, and tell him, I have served thee so many years, and thou hast never denied me any good thing to this day; I have asked much, and had much, now I come to ask for the continuance of thy Presence with the succeeding Generation, deny me not, O Lord.

2. In *respect of men*, *even of those that are to succeed*, they that are gathering to their Fathers, have an opportunity to do good, by distilling the things of God into their hearts; *Joshua* and the Elders their Presence did tend much to the promoting of holiness, *Josh.*24.31. *Judg.*2.7. Whilst *Jehoiadah* lived there was an advantage in that, 2 *Chron.*24. God and Nature hath put an advantage into the hands of the Ancient; *Levit.*19.32. *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God*, *I am the Lord*: *q. d.* You deny me to be Lord, if you do not acknowledge Age.

Mot. 3. *Consider, that it is a Generation that I speak, and such a Generation as that by many weighty and momentous Consi-*

derations

rations you are bound to render. As to a Generation, for a Generation, *David* thought it was matter of great moment, *Psal.* 71.18. q d. *I had rather dy then outlive the opportunity of making known the Lord to the rising Generation.* It is not one, or two, or a few, but a Generation that I plead for; and it is not only a Generation, but *your Generation*: now I come near indeed, *a Generation that proceeds from your own loins, and from your own bowels*: Methinks this should prove a very feeling Argument, *1 Chron.* 28.9. *Now Solomon my son*; not *Solomon a Son*, but Solomon *my Son*, I charge thee by the bond of Relation, that thou *serve the God of thy Fathers.* And hence Solomon himself acknowledges his care & instruction. What he received from his Parents, was an effect of their endeared affection to him, *Prov.* 4.3,4 Fond affections will vent themselves in foolish and temporal things, but sanctified affection in care to promove holiness, and ingage *the continuance of the Lords Presence.* Oh what love, what affections, what bowels towards your Children? Have you none? or if you have, how do they put forth? Habour they may have something to live upon when I am gone, they must have house and land &c. and shall they not have a God? Shall they have your Estate, and not have your God to be their God? Again, they are a Generation [illegible] your betrustments, A Generation committed to your [illegible] charg to bring up for the Lord, and so in that [illegible] to be *the Lords Generation*, Ezek. 16.21. God be[illegible] you with them respectively to educate for himself. A[illegible] are they not a Generation devoted to the Lord? [illegible] *ons of vows*, more particularly devoted to be the Lords, cast upon him from the womb, *Psal.* 22.10. Again, are they not *a Generation for whose sakes you run great hazards?* Was it not for their sakes that many came hither? was not this the end? I pray consider, what was the thing proposed? *why came you into this land? was it not mainly with respect to the rising Generation?* And what with respect to them? was it to leave them a rich and wealthy people? was it to leave them Houses, Lands, Livings? Oh no: but to leave God in the midst of them. Again, are they not a Generation that call for the utmost care & help that may be afforded

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to them on all hands, a poor needy Generation hard beſtead, it may be more then their Fathers in ſome reſpects, Temptations as great, Corruptions as ſtrong, Hearts as bad, and having been freed from ſuch Perſecutions, Afflictions, *&c.* they have not had ſuch opportunities their Fathers had, to know and ſee what was in their hearts. Me-thinks I ſee them like a Company of Children in a Boat that is driven out to Sea, may be it may come to ſhore, but in greater danger to ſink or drown then otherwiſe. Yea, are there not ſad ſymptomes of the Lords departure from them? Is not all in hazard to be loſt? What think you of a Veſſel at Sea that ſprings a leak, and takes in water apace, and Marriners ſome dead, many ſick, a few left to keep Pump going, Are they not in danger to ſink and periſh in the waters? Is it not ſo here? Again, if you conſider the time paſt or time to come, they both put you upon the utmoſt care and diligence. Time paſt: *How much time is gone, but how little is done for the riſing Generation*? little Faith, little Prayer, little Pattern-walking. Nay, are there not many that lay ſtumbling-blocks in their way? I know men are apt to complain againſt the riſing Generation, and it cannot be denied but that there is cauſe enough. I would to God I and all the Lords people were rightly ſenſible of it; but I beſeech you conſider whether you give not too much occaſion thereunto: Do they not ſee *your* Pride, *your* Worldlineſs, *your* Paſſion, *your* Vanity? and doth not this harden and ſtumble them? And if not ſo, yet Duty is neglected; it may be if you prayed more, they would be more gracious: Or with reſpect to time to come, it is but a little while like to be with you, we may improve that of the Apoſtle, 2 *Pet.* 1. 13, 14. *ſhortly you muſt put off the Earthly Tabernacle*; therefore improve your little time for the good of them that are to come after you.

Mot. 4. *Sincere Endeavour to continue the Lords Preſence with after-Generations, ſhall not be without ſome good Succeſs.* I dare be bold to ſay that the Lord will not leave your Poſterity, unleſs by your remiſsneſs you declare you do not much care whether he abide with them yea or no. *Do you your duty, and the Lord will not lye behind hand in that which is his work*: If you begin to be

glutted with the Presence of the Lord your selves, that you do not think it worth the pains taking, to leave Him and his Presence as the greatest Blessing to your Children after you, then no marvel though he remove away: But if you are resolved to keep him not only with your selves, but with yours also, I tell you he cannot finde in his heart to leave either you or them, *Prov.*22.6. In an ordinary course of Providence it shall be so; then be able to say, as *David* to *Solomon*, 1 Chron.28.20. *The Lord God, even my God will be with thee, he will not fail thee nor forsake thee.*

Qu. 5. *What Comfort will this be, when upon good grounds you are perswaded the Lord will be with those that come after you, even as he was with you?* No greater joy, then that you have had a care of Posterity, and that it hath not been in vain, 3 *Joh.* 3.4. this glads the heart of godly Parents, *Prov.*23.15,16, 24,25. see *Deut.*30.2.

Quest. *But what shall we do that we may retain the Lords Presence with us, and convey the same to those after us?*

Answ. *Be willing to do what you can do*: (this makes way for all other Directions) Oh! do what you can for the rising Generation. It is true, you cannot give them regenerating and sanctifying grace, but let not that discourage you from what you can: and though you cannot, yet know that one can, who is infinitely more gracious to the children of men then thou art. *Neglect not duty, because you can do no more then your duty*: Oh live a great while in a little time, *do more in one year, then in seven before*: as *Israel* in the wilderness made more dispatch of the way the last year, then in thirty before; so here, respecting the rising Generation. But more particularly.

1. *If you would have the Presence of the Lord continued to those that are to come after you, then make sure of this, that you enjoy the special Presence of God your selves.* If you would leave Gods Presence with others, you must be sure to enjoy God your selves: If God in Christ be your God, then you may have hopes that *God will be the God of your Seed*, according to the Promise, *Gen.*17,7. He that hath no interest in God, cannot insure any interest to others: He that hath only a visible interest

intereſt, an intereſt in the viſible Covenant, he can do no more for his child but leave that unto him, he cannot believe for any more, nor act faith for any more: *An hypocrite cannot believe that God will be the God of his childe by ſpecial grace*; for he that hath no faith to lay hold of God for himſelf, hath not faith to lay hold of God for his childe: Be ſure therefore of this, that you are under the Promiſe and Covenant in the Spiritual part of it. *You never knew yet, but the Lord did take hold ſavingly of ſome at leaſt of the poſterity of thoſe that were indeed godly.* *David*, a man of great obſervation and experience in the World, tels what he could ſay to this, *Pſal.* 37.25. Nay, its made ſome kind of evidence of Sincerity when a mans Repentance is ſuch, as that Father and his childe repent too, *Deut.* 30.6. Not but that a man may repent and his childe never repent; its poſſible that a man may be converted, and children many of them never converted, but it is not uſual: this is ſomething a rare thing, that a man ſhould be godly and his children all ungodly; moſt ordinarily if a man turn with all his heart, his children [illegible] ſooner or later, more or fewer of them.

2. *[illegible] very carefull in the due performance of Family duties, towards thoſe that are under your charge.* This is the Lords great Command, *Deut.* 6.7. and *Abrahams* ſpecial Commendation, *Gen.* 18.19. the [illegible] of this the Lord puniſhes with rejecting ſuch children, 1 *Sam.* 3. [illegible]

But what are theſe Duties?

1. *Overſight of the ways of the Family, that they yield outward Obedience to God*, and particularly in Sanctifying the Sabbath. You ſhall find Religion lives and dyes, as men are exact or remiſs in obſerving the Sabbath. And it is obſervable, that the very words of the fourth Commandment doe expreſly bind all Maſters of Families (which is not to be found in any other Commandment) *Thou, and thy Son and thy Daughter*, Exod. 20.10. The Lord ſpeaks by name to Family-Governours, as if it were to make them Overſeers of ſanctifying the Sabbath.

2. *To inſtruct them in matters of Religion, that they may not only profeſs it, but feel the power of it in life and Converſation,*

Thus were Parents commanded of old, *Deut.* 6.7. *Prov.* 22.6. 2 *Tim.* 3.15.

3. *A carefull endeavour that they may profit by the publick Ministry.* When Ministers work in publick is done, the Family work begins: For this, see Christs example, *Mark* 4.13.

4. *A declaration of the admirable works of God for his people,* Josh 4.6.21. Psal. 22.31 & 78.4.

5. *by giving them a good example*: Precept without Patterns will do little good; you must lead them to Christ by Examples as well as Counsel; you must set your selves first, and speak by lives as well as words, you must live Religion, as well as talk Religion, *Josh.* 24.15. This is rather to be attended; because Familyes are the Seminaries of Church and Common-wealth. *Keep the Lord with you in Families, and keep him then in all Societyes; let him go thence, and he will quickly go from the rest.* Here begins all apostacy and degeneration; the ruine of Churches and Country springs from thence: *Ruine Familyes, and ruine all*: So on the other hand, keep God there, and keep him every where. The Generation to come will reap the fruit of Family education; Such children as you bring up, such parents will they be, when you are gone, to their Children, and such Children shall they have when they are Parents in the next Generation. You then that are Governours of Families, are the very making or marring of the World, *Psa.* 144.12. Unless posterity be polished, hewn and squared by domestical discipline, they are never fit to be built in Gods building. Are not some parents worse than that rich Glutton, who being in hell desired concerning his fathers house, that they might be forewarned, and therefore desired Abraham to send *Lazarus to his brethren to testifie to them, that they come not to the place of torment*, Luke 16.27 28? But you will not admonish them, you will not teach them *Moses* and the Prophets, you will not shew them the danger hanging over their heads, you will not lead a good example before them while you live. Oh! you may fear that your Children one day will curse you, and wish that they had been the Children of *Indians* rather.

5. *Keep as much of God as you were wont to do in your own Hearts*

Hearts and Converſations: Suffer not the Lord to go away in any degree or meaſure out of your hearts. In a word, keep up the life and power of godlineſs in your own Souls. *The Lord never takes away his viſible preſence from the ſucceeding Generation, unleſs he takes away his ſecret inward preſence from former Generations.* The ſecond Generation ſeldome or never prove total Apoſtates, but the firſt are deep ſecret Heart-revolters. Heart-ſins in the firſt, grow up into Life-ſins in the ſecond; if you decline at all, they will decline altogether. *The loſs of the firſt love is enough to remove the Candleſtick*, Rev. 2. 4, 5. You complain againſt the Pride, Profaneneſs of young ones, and alas that there is ſuch cauſe! Oh but who is there amongſt you that cries out of the ſecret ſins of their own hearts? Thoſe ſins of a ſecond growth of Profaneneſs in ſome, Worldlineſs in many, Deadneſs and Formality in all, Ah! who is it that looks on the hard heartedneſs, impenitency of this ſecond Generation, and ſayes, that now the Lord is puniſhing my hard heartedneſs upon my Childe, he is whipping me on his back. Men, Brethren and Fathers, you had once another Spirit, had you not [illegible] *right New-England Spirit.* Oh! ſhould I knock at your [illegible] and ask, is the old Zeal, Love, Heavenly-mindedneſs that was in this heart twenty, thirty years ago, is it there ſtill? Are you the ſame men you were? Are you not ſtrangely changed? Have you as much of God as you had? Hath not the world got ſomething? Wife and Children ſomething? Trials and Temptations of a New place, or hard beginnings got ſomething? Oh! have you not lived to ſee much of your former life and godlineſs laid in the grave? Have you the ſame Hearts you had? Are your worſt dayes now as good as your beſt then? ſo it is with growing Saints that live much with God: Or rather is not the contrary true, that you are grown old, and grown cold; cold indeed, cold at heart; aged in years and decayed in power of Godlineſs! But why do I complain? Let me perſwade, *Oh recover, recover ſtrength for your own Souls ſake, and for the ſake of the Generation that is to come after you.* How can you hope that you ſhould ever find much of the Lords preſence, if you that once had it loſe it, and ſee it no

more? *If in your time Profession and Lukewarmness* go hand in hand together, then in those that comes after you *Profession and Profaneness* shall go hand in hand together. If you keep your Religion and Forms with their *buts*, they that succeed, will be Professors with their *buts*. You are Christians, Ay! *but* cold, *but* dead, *but* lifeless: They shall be Professors, *but* vicious, *but* jeering, *but* scoffing, *but* drinking Companions. What hopes that the next Generation will ever enjoy much of the Presence of Gods grace, and power of godliness, if you see it dead and buried before you go to your graves? I remember what the Prophet *Elijah* said to *Elisha*, if he could see when he was taken up in the fiery Chariot, it should be so but if not, it should not be so, 2 *Kings* 2. 10. I allude to it thus; if the rising Generation could see you going to heaven with a great measure of Zeal, Life, Spiritualness, then there might be some hopes that they that are left behind might enjoy a double portion of your Spirit, but if they see your Life lost, Love cooled, Godliness decayed, how can it be?

4. *Lay out Faith and prayer for them to the utmost.* There is no help in Earth, but there is help in Heaven. Plead with God, & plead hard; believe and believe strongly; Pray more and more and speed better, the Lord will suffer himself to be commanded in this case, *Isa.* 45. 11. You have very good [illegible] of God in the Word, *Deut.* 30. 6. and when you pray [illegible] must pray feelingly, *i.e.* with an heart sensible of their [illegible]. Let the sins of the rising Generation be the burthen of the first Generation; their Unbelief, the matter of their complaint before the Lord. *Many complain their Children have not such Privileges as they ought, I pray God grant that they may all have what the Lord hath appointed for them*: But alas! where is the man that complains that his Childe wants saving knowledge of Jesus Christ? Oh where is the Parent that sayes in bitterness of soul, My Childe hath a hard heart, and a proud Will, an unteachable Spirit; Civil he is, but alas, that's all the Religion I can see? Oh that there were more of those complaints in secret before the Lord! I verily believe that the Lord will awaken a Spirit of Prayer, before he gives us any sure pledges of his abiding with us, in all

sorts

ſorts of men amongſt us. See how *David* prayes for *Solomon*, 1 *Chron.*29. 19. and this will fetch bleſſings. *Wipe in Heaven, and weare in Earth be Monica, Auſtin's* Mother, after ſhe had cried and wept to a godly Miniſter for her then ungodly Son, was anſwered by that good man, *Fieri nequit ut filius tantarum lachrymarum pereat*, It cannot be that a childe of ſo many Prayers and Tears ſhould periſh. And it is obſerveable, That before the Lord give out any ſpecial *Generation mercy*, he humbles, he prepares his people for that mercy by deep humiliation; he uſually layes them exceeding low as in firſt Converſion, with reſpect to perſonal mercies, ſo with reſpect to Generation mercy. The continuance of the Lords Preſence Generation after Generation, is a very ſignal mercy, and God the Lord will humble his people in order to this mercy, and this humiliation will cauſe you to ſanctifie Gods Name, though he ſhould take away his Preſence, *Ezek.*3. 12. Secondly, He brings a Sentence of death on the mercy, that to the eye of Senſe and Reaſon there is no likelihood that ever it ſhould come to paſs, nay it grows more unlikely every day then other; as with *Iſrael* in *Egypt*, *Exod.*5. *Iſaac* muſt be bound, laid on the Altar, the knife at the throat, that ſo Faith might receive him, as it were from the dead. *Only this makes me hope, that the Lords Preſence may yet continue with his people in our Generations, becauſe that mercy ſeems to be a dead mercy*: There is no likelihood that it ſhould be ſo, the knife at *Iſaac*'s throat; Faith can fetch *Iſaac* from the Altar, *Iſa.*26. 19. When Churches are dead, and the Members of Churches are dead, yet then the Covenant lives, the Promiſe lives. Oh look to the Lord in that word, *Iſa.*65.22, *to the end*, and 62.9.

5. *If you would have God to be with you and yours after you, then ſee that you, each one in your reſpective places, are with, and for the Lord*: You have the duty and encouragement laid before you, 2 *Chron.*15.2. A profeſſing people they alwayes break with God firſt, before he breaks with them. 'Tis the very end of the Lords works and diſpenſations to you, that ſo you might be for him, *Iſa.*43.21. *Queſt.* But you will ſay, *what is this to be with the Lord? How ſhall we be ſo with or for the Lord, as*

that

that we may be sure he will still be with, and for us? Ans. *Work, and work for God in your several capacities*; Parents, Husbands, Wives, if you do not work for him, you are not with him: *Mark*, 13.34. *He gave to every man his work*, and therefore it is that their working with God is said to be a being with God, *Hos.* 9.8. *The watchmen of Ephraim was with my God*; i. e. they did the work of God: and so walking with God, as you may see by that of *David*, 1 *King.* 14. and of *Hezekiah*, 2 *King.* 18. 6, 7. 2. *Be for the special interest of God*: Mat. 12.30. *He that is not with me is against me*; Zech. 9.7. *He that remaineth shall be for our God*, i. e. for his Glory, for his Christ, for his Cause. Labour therefore for a publick Spirit, let all your own interest give way to his; Oh let nothing be dear in comparison of Christ and his interest, *Acts* 20.24. To be of a private Spirit is not to be for God. 3. *In a special manner see that you are for his Institutions*: This is called *the Kingdome of God*, *Acts* 1.3. If for Christ, then for his Kingdome, *That man is not for God or Christ, that is not for Ordinances*: These are called *the Name of Christ*, Acts 15.14,16. He that is not for building Gods Tabernacle, would not indeed that God should have a Name amongst men. *Remember what you said when you came into the Church*, Isa. 44.5. *I am the Lords*, &c. *Especially see that you be for those Institutions and Ordinances that are ordained by Christ to bring the rising Generation into a holy subjection unto the Gospel of Christ. Oh take heed how you turn them out of Gods Inheritance, lest you bring a curse upon your Souls, and their Souls after you*, 1 Sam. 28.19. *He that takes them into his Covenant, he saith he will be a God to them*, Gen. 17. *Take heed how you deny them any part in the Lord, lest thereby they turn to serve other gods*, Josh. 22.24,25. *Where the Lord will enlarge Covenant mercy, Oh tremble to straighten it or bound it to the precepts of men: we & our poor Children after us, have need enough of all the grace of the Covenant, let us not despise it, or cast them out our selves from it. If that be the Lords word, that the children of his servants shall continue, and their seed be established before him*, Psal. 102.28. *Labour not to make that Promise of no effect. Most certain it is, that the Lords Presence is to be sought and enjoyed in Gods Wayes,*

and,

and in them only. Will the Lord abide with a Generation that have nothing to do with a Church state, *Ordinances, Ministry, and the visible outward Administrations of the things of his House? I know he may for a while: But will he long? Nay surely, if they must have nothing to do with these, God will have nothing to do with them.*

6. *Maintain a Spirit of Love towards God, and towards one another:* If you love, he will not leave you. Be not like *Ephesus* that *lost their first love*, but repent and do your *first works*, Rev. 2. 3. Love is a uniting grace, and will not let the person beloved go: This keeps God in Heaven, because nothing but love is there; for where that is, he will be, 1 *Joh.* 4. 18 *Joh.* 14. 23. If ever the Lord leave you or yours after you, it will be because he is not loved: and if it be asked why did the Lord so soon forsake his people, after that he had done so much for them? the Lord will answer and say, It was because I could not have their hearts, I went away for want of love. Oh! it is matter of sad lamentation, that *there is such a spirit of dying affection towards Christ in New-England.* There is sad declinings in the Spirit of the Churches, the Lord knows: If the Lord take away any thing of his Presence, they can make up the want of God in the enjoyment of the Creature, as some men do when they pass by old hedges, they throw bushes in and stop up gaps: so do men stop all their gaps, all their breaches, with brambles & bushes of Creatures: yea some, if the Lord take away any choice mercy from them, what do they do? why, they grow jealous of him, & love him the less: the reason why he takes away their beloved, is that he may have their whole heart, *Hos.* 2. 6. Ah! how many particular persons are there under whom Christ is a stumbling block, some offended at one thing, some at another; some like not this Rule, some not that command, some are displeased at this Providence, and others at that: Oh that you would consult with your own hearts! Have you more delight in one lust for Christ, more delight it may be in vain jollity, then in secret Prayer. 2. Love one to another, 2 *Cor.* 13. Breaches make way for God to be gone.

7. *Get a sympathizing Spirit with the gasping, groaning, bleeding and dying condition of that Generation that are to succeed you.* Oh! look upon them with an eye of pity, & let your hearts moura much for them in secret: It may be they speak not for your compassions, and how shall they? many of them know not their own misery: but their condition

calls aloud for all the Prayers, Tears, Faith of the Lords precious ones amongst us.

1. Take a view *of their present state*; And what is it? Is it not that which justly deserves all the compassions that may be? If to be without God and Christ, and in danger of death and ruine every moment; if to be dead to all Calls, and bold and desperate in wayes of Sin and Security, be a condition to be pitied, many of them need pity. Ah! did thy Redeemer mourn over thy Soul, and hath thou no tears for others? He sighed Christ when he came to *Lazarus* grave, *He wept, because he loved him*; Do you not go to the graves of dead Souls every day? but where is your affectionate yowling of bowels? where are your sighs and groans? possibly one may hear you complain and bewail their deprivement of outward Priviledges; Oh but where is that man, and where is the woman that bewails before the Lord the Spiritual misery of young men and women, that saith in secret, Oh what Preaching do they enjoy, what Sermons do they hear, what Means do they partake of? Oh but what hearts have they? Oh how blinded, how hardened, how unperswadeable! as if the Lord [illegible] his finger upon that strand, [illegible]

2. Consider *their present Providences*; and they call for pity & compassion towards them: The things that concern their peace & comfort cannot be effected and accomplished for their good [illegible] talking, but little practising: Nay, that which concerns their interest is made the Butt of Contention, as if the Lord [illegible] *divide his people*, when they are conspiring to prejudice the welfare of the rising Generation. Again, *these souls are most likely* [illegible] *are soonest* [illegible] *away after another*. What [illegible] become of poor Children, when Heads of Families die? What will become of unskilful Passengers, when Pilot and able Steerman is taken away? *what will become of this Generation, when those that should lead them and light them in the way to Heaven, may not live out half their dayes amongst them.* Good Lord, let not that befall them, that sometime did *Israel* of old, that they should have such Prophets as should make them vain, and speak a vision of their own hearts, & not out of the mouth of the Lord; that should say to them that despise God, The Lord hath said ye shall have peace, & to every one that walketh in the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come to you. so that they should strengthen the hand of evil doers,

13 *Deus avertat Omen.*

doers, that none returns from his wickedness, but that from the Prophets of Jerusalem prophaneness shall go forth into all the Land, Jer. 23. 14, 16, 19.

Again, 3. *If you look to what their condition is like to be at last*; will God bear always with a carnal unsavoury Generation? Must they not bring good fruit, or else will they not be in danger to be cut down? Mat. 3. 10. Will a few leaves of civility and formality save them from the curse? will such lifting up to heaven not make way to the thrusting down to hell? Mat. 11. 23. This I will say that amongst the posterity of a professing people, they will *live to be the most happy or most unhappy Generation*. Oh get a spirit of pity then, you can do but little, but can you not pray? have you no bowels? have you no tears? Oh go draw them on to godliness, bring them near to God by Faith & Prayer, yea & by all wayes of his appointment count it not want of grace so to do whether think you had more grace, Christ or his Disciples? yet we see Christ was tender towards Children, and loth to reject them when as his disciples were rigid towards them.

But it is time for us to address our selves *to this present Generation*. I may speak to you in the words of *Daniel* (Dan. 5. 27. *wherefore let my counsel be acceptable unto you*, retain the Lords presence with you, I know it is a very difficult thing to speak prevailingly to a Generation that have been brought up under the solemn warnings of Gods Word & yet not wrought upon, it's a very difficult thing to do good in a backsliding time, when men have been accustomed to send away the Lord from their hearts, it's now a hard work to perswade men to hold him by main strength, and not to let him go. In times of degeneracy there is not much likelihood of doing much good, Jer. 25. 3, 4, 5. Secure hearts that have had many means, many warnings, many years, and not awakened, if one should rise from the dead to such an one, he would do little good, Luke 16. 31. Yet I will try *once more* what the Lord will do, though me-thinks my work is something like *Ezekiels*, Chap. 37. who was there commanded to prophesie over dead bones: I know I have dead hearts to deal withall, but yet the Lord may breathe the breath of life into them; *Therefore O Generation, see ye the word of the Lord*, Jer. 2. 31. *You that are the succeeding and surviving Generation, whatever you part with, part not with God*, keep God with you whatever you keep, or not keep. And to stir up hereunto,

Consider, 1. *That the Lord will most undoubtedly leave and forsake you unless you do to the utmost of what you can do to keep him amongst you.* The Lord is resolved on it, he will not abide with you, except you do beseech him with your prayers, tears, cries and groans not to be gone. *Solomon* did no more then need required, when he cried to him, *Be with us.* Verily the Lord will not thrust himself upon such a Generation as do but little care for his Presence. If you are of an indifferent spirit, at a kind of disway in your own thoughts as it were, the Lord will soon resolve the case. *Psa.* 132. 11, 12. And therefore take the Counsel the Lord gives, *Jer.* 6.8. *Be instructed, lest my Soul depart from you.* Make no other account but the Lord will take away his Presence & leave you desolate, except you rouse up out of your security, and be more in earnest with him, then you have been hitherto. Those endeavours that you have put forth, will not keep God amongst you: if you seek him with all your heart and soul, you may find him. *Deut.* 4. and after the same manner the he is found, he is kept amongst a people, and therefore I may make use of those words, *who is on the Lord's side, who?* *Who* is bent to keep the Presence of the Lord with them as he was with their fathers, *who?* Ah! how will you ever be able to stand before God, men, or your own consciences another day, when it shall be charged upon you, that it was because of your sloth & negligence & supine security, that God is gone from the midst of you.

Mot. 2. *There is no little expectation concerning you.* You are a Generation of great hopes and great fears; the Lord expects much from you that you will do much for the glory of his Name, *Isa.* 63.8. *He said, Surely they are children that will not lie*; he hath been expecting a long time, *Luke* 13. 7. and your predecessors those that have been before you all their expectations under God himself, are in you: they hope you will stand up in their stead, and bear up the cause of Religion when they are gone: And so also you are a Generation of great fears; some they have a holy fear concerning you, such a fear as was sometimes in the heart of *Job* towards his Children, *Chap.* 1. lest you should sin against God, lest you should forget God, and the things of God: yea the Lord is pleased to express himself so, as if he had some fears concerning the rising and succeeding Generation of a professing people, *Psal.* 78. 5. And some they have a sinful fear; Satan and all wicked men they are afraid what you will do, they are afraid lest

you

you should *strengthen what your Fathers have done before you*: & I pray take notice what you have in your hands, it is to promove or interrupt the glory of Religion; you will be instrumental (above what your Fathers have been) either to the advantage or disadvantage of Religion; the Name of Christ will either gain or lose much by you. If two Generations be for God and the wayes of God, this will be for the honour of Gods Name: and therefore it is that the Lord is so delighted in his Name, *I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, the God of three Generations it's greatly for the glory of God, when Truth hath the advantage of a double Generation; so on the contrary Religion will suffer exceedingly if you desert it. If it be said, that the very children pulled down what their Fathers builded, this will cast dishonour upon the way they walked in, *Judg.*2.17. and the Lord complains of wrong and reproach cast upon him, when men turn away from him to the wayes of sin, *Jer.*2.5. I may allude to the words of *Paul* spoken in another case, 1 *Cor* 9.15. *It were better for me to die, then that any should make my glory void*; it were better for you to die, then that Gods Name should suffer by you, as it will suffer if you keep not the Lords Presence with you. Oh take heed what you do, take heed how you sad the heart of God, and godly men, and how you glad the heart of Satan and the wicked. 1 *Chro.* 28.1.

Mot.3. *Consider that it is the turn of your Generation to stand up for God, and what can you do for him if he be not with you?* Elders are gathered away both in Church and Common wealth, their work is done as to many of them already, and the Gospel and Ordinances are to be transmitted into your hands, the Affairs of Christs Kindome will be upon your shoulders; Your Fathers before you served God in their Generation, *Judg.*2.7. *Acts* 13.36. they lived and died in the Faith of the Gospel, and the profession thereof, and now you come to act your part, the Lords voice to you is, *Look you now to it*, I trusted your Fathers, and gave them my Laws and Statutes, and they were faithful to their death, and now they rest from their labours, and their works follow them, and now I put the like upon you that I did upon them: Oh how will you manage this betrustment without the Lords Presence? Consider 1. *The greatness of your Generation work*; 'tis too heavy for the shoulders of any Angel in heaven to bear. Look at personal concerns, look at publick concerns, it's not work for men, for

our selves, but for God. 2. The dayes wherein you live are backsliding times, *evil dayes*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 1. times of great degeneracy and Apostacy: Alas! little humble walking now, little self denial, little holiness; Oh how weighty and difficult is their work, that are now called out to stand up for Christ? It is difficult at any time, *Onus humeris Angelicis formidandum*, as *Chrysostom* saith concerning the work of the Ministry, *A burthen that the shoulders of Angels might shake to come under*, but especially in such times wherein we are fallen: How hard is it to keep up an House when it's fallen down, to keep the Ship from sinking, when the leak that is sprung hath almost filled it with water. 3. The hands that help they are but few, and those that hinder are many: what can be done at such a time as this, if the *Lords presence* be not with us.

Mot. 4. *You have many special Engagements to hold God with you, he is your Fathers God, and not willing to leave you*: The holy Ghost gives counsel not to forsake our Fathers friend, *Prov.* 27. 9. much less *your Fathers God*, It's an heart endearing consideration that God was the God of Relations, this helps to sweeten the presence of God to us, as men in other things they will not part with what was their Progenitors, Oh this was my Fathers, and I will not part with it: So here, *Exod.* 15. 2. he is a God left, commended and bequeathed to you by your Fathers: Those that knew how good he was left this with you as their most weighty Counsel, that whatever you did, you would make choice of the Lord to be your God, *Deut.* 28. 9. 1 *Kin.* 2. 3. 4 3. You have the pattern and example of those that were before you to encourage hereunto: what is it now well with them? did they not live in peace, and die in comfort, *Peace and Truth was in their dayes*, they never repented of their choice they made. Verily their holiness will be a dreadful witness against you, when the Lord shall say as *Jer.* 22. 15, 16. but Gods presence was like to them: we may well say as *Ruth*, 1. 16. *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee, whither thou goest I will go, thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.* 4. The cost and care that Predecessors have been at, that so they might leave God with Children, is to be seriously thought of, they may say of the Gospel and Ordinances thereof, as 2 *Sam.* 23. 17. They purchased them with the hazard of their lives, as sometimes *Jacob* gave *Joseph* a blessing, that he took out of the

hand

hand of the Amorites with his ſword and bowe, *Gen.* 48. 22.

Mot. 5. *What will become of you if God be not with you*? what a condition will you then be in, if God leave you, and caſt you out of his ſight? *Ier.* 16.12.13. 1. Your ſins will be worſe then the ſins of others, 2 *Kin.* 21.11. 2. You will not be one whit better in reſpect of any ſpiritual advantage, that you have ſprung from thoſe that had the Lord to be their God, *Ezek.* 16.2,3 4,5. *Iſa.* 57.3.4. 3. The want of Gods Preſence will bring a curſe upon all bleſſings, & make your condition more miſerable then the worſt. In this life nothing but plagues, woes and miſeries. *Hoſ.* 3.3. *Deut.* 31. 17. yea enemies that ſhall prey on you, will pretend they do it juſtly, *Ier.* 50.7. Ordinances Sabbaths, Sermons ſhall blinde, harden, and ſeal you up in ſin. Oh! to be prayed heard, wept down to hell, how dreadfull is that? You ſhall be plagued above others, *Amos* 3. 2. Gods hand wil follow you, *Judg.* 2.15. and at laſt you ſhall die in ſin. *Ezk.* 18. 9.10. and be caſt off for ever, 1. *Chro.* 29.9. *Ier.* 16.12,13. and go to Hell, though the Children of *Abraham*, *Luke.* 16.24. your godly Parents will be ſo far from helping you, that they will rejoice and bleſſe God for executing juſtice upon you to all eternity; neither your Fathers, nor the God of your fathers will own you; But oh let it be our Prayer and Care, *that the Lord our God may be with us, as he was with our Fathers, let him not leave us nor forſake us.*

READER, *The Author was intended another Sermon by way of Direction to thoſe of the* Riſing Generation, *to ſhew them what courſe they muſt take, that the Lords gracious preſence may be ſo* ſucceſſively continued. *But here* God took him thus ſerving his Generation *who are by reaſon of the Authors death deprived of the benefit of thoſe meditations.*

FINIS